

Feng shui: It just might help sell your house

By Kurt Gutknecht

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Ancient Chinese practices just might be useful in a tighter real estate market. Mary Jane Brummer, a Madison-area real estate agent with Keller Williams, is also a certified practitioner of feng shui, the ancient Chinese practice of placing objects and arranging space to create a more harmonious environment.

Adherents say the practice has numerous benefits. While Brummer didn't become a practitioner to sell real estate, she says it's a natural adjunct to the profession.

Brummer said she has always been attracted to the precepts associated with feng shui. She was always creating "houses" and other spaces as a child.

She also had a knack for staging houses for sale when she became a Realtor a decade ago. Friends told her she was "good with color and placement," Brummer said.

She was instinctively drawn to Native American concepts of sacred spaces and reverence for objects and nature.

She was interested in feng shui, but deterred by the more rigid approaches associated with some of the feng shui schools. She eventually discovered a better fit and was trained at the School of Instinctive Feng Sui Interior Alignment.

Feng (wind) shui (water) involves the energy associated with life force or spiritual energy known as chi, which is affected by orientation and placement of objects in a person's living space. Certain areas are dedicated to specific purposes, such as relationships, that reflect a resident's interests and aspirations.

Brummer said selecting colors, and placement of objects and furniture are built on residents' intentions to enhance certain aspects of their lives.

There are general principles, such as making sure entryways are inviting to chi, avoiding clutter and using objects such as mirrors and crystal to bring forth positive chi. Feng shui also emphasizes colors, light and natural materials.

Feng shui has entered the common vernacular and most people are familiar with at least some of the concepts. Of course, there are also detractors and doubters.

"You'll know it when you enter a house that's been arranged according to feng shui. It does make a difference. I believe very deeply in the value of this process," Brummer said.

Several of her clients said feng shui has transformed their houses. Brummer said a few have reconsidered selling after she's done. The transformation can often be achieved by reducing clutter, rearranging furniture and repainting.



Mary Jane Brummer says feng shui is compatible with her personal life and her real estate business.

Feng shui "is a natural fit with real estate," Brummer said. It's consistent with the role of a house's curb appeal, which is part of Brummer's "real estate mantra" that emphasizes "clear, clean and color."

That advice seems obvious, but she said it's still often ignored, she said. Feng shui has made her more aware of how to employ practices that get the energy flowing to pull people in so they linger and stay.

Brummer has a master's degree in counseling and worked as a counselor and social worker, skills which she finds useful in understanding a client's intentions. She offers consultations to "anyone who has the desire to improve the energy and pleasantness of their homes.

"Feng shui brings good things into people's lives," she said. For those with real estate on the market, a sale could certainly be considered one of those good things.

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